COURSE DESCRIPTION

The MBA Team Consulting class is a capstone MBA course designed to provide students with a fieldwork experience that is multifunctional in nature. The class is structured as a consulting engagement and allows students to apply the skills learned in their core classes. At the end of the course, the student teams present their recommendations and a final written report to their clients.

This course is an opportunity for students to develop their business skills, i.e. teamwork, teambuilding, thought leadership, communications skills, project management skills, etc.

The best consulting engagement and final report will be awarded the George Walters Prize for Interfunctional Management, named for Dr. George Walters – the founder of the course and the Team Consulting program.

COURSE MATERIALS

Resources:
Required material:

Recommended material:

It is expected that you will use all resources from your core classes to support this course. If necessary, we will schedule a one hour class presentation with the Rutgers librarian, for a session on secondary research. In addition, I will also arrange for other faculty members to assist you in a specific area such as Marketing, Supply Chain, Statistics, Finance, etc. It is the Team’s responsibility to request help in any of these areas. Finally, the following sources of consulting updates may also prove useful: Bain Insights, McKinsey Quarterly, Deloitte Insights, BCG Strategic Institute publications, Harvard Business Review and Sloan Management Review.
LEARNING GOALS

- Work effectively with a team.
- Apply academic learning’s to “real life” business project within a tight schedule.
- Enhance project management, presentation and team building skills. You will receive peer feedback at the end of the class.
- Utilize multifunctional methods and tools of analysis in problem solving. The faculty advisor will provide feedback on the work plan, the analysis, final recommendations, and the final report.
- Serve multiple stakeholders: the client, the course professor, the faculty advisor, your team. Each of these stakeholders will provide a component of your course grade.
- Communicate professionally and effectively.
- Make recommendations to a firm or organization based on data analysis. You will never be 100% sure or 100% accurate or comprehensive.
- Develop and facilitate a project plan.
- Recognize and conceptualize a complex issue into a clearly written summary.

GRADING
Work plan and interim deliverables (team) 15% Written report (team) 20%
Oral presentation (individual & team) 20%
Client Grade (team) 20%
Team and/or Advisor Feedback (individual) 25%

Grading scale:
A - 94+
A- - 91 – 93.9
B+ - 88 – 90.9
B - 81 – 87.9
C+ - 77 – 80.9
C - 71 – 76.9
D – 66 – 70.9
F - < 66

WRITTEN REPORT EVALUATION CRITERIA*

- The Report reflects a careful analysis of the client’s needs and a substantive identification of underlying problems rather than surface symptoms.
- The report has an executive summary that professionally outlines the work statement, problem identification, methodology, and major recommendations.
- The report is written entirely for the client’s benefit and therefore has language, explanations, and illustrations that are easily understandable by the client.
- The scope of the report reflects a thorough, in-depth analysis of the business and its management system with thoughtful solutions/recommendations.
- When financial ratios, graphs, and management terminology are used, the student team provides a clear explanation of exactly how these analysis tools relate to the client’s specific situation.
- The analysis and recommendations flow in a logical relationship and have a solid rationale grounded in excellent management practice/knowledge.
• The root problems or opportunities for improvement are addressed forthrightly with pragmatic, highly useful recommendations.
• Specific action steps for implementing the important recommendations/solutions are presented with consideration given to feasible cost, time, and personnel requirements.
• The final report MUST be in a hardcover format. Copies can be made at school and then formatted at Kinko’s or comparable stores for final design. Arrangements will be made with the client who will pay for office supplies.

* Source: Small Business Institute®

PRESENTATION:
• A bulleted outline of the written report, including charts, graphs, and other supporting data.
• Prepared with the objective to present the Team’s recommendations, and promote discussion with the client.
• It is not to be read, but discussed.
• I am available to improve your presentation skills in a separate meeting.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

The major written assignments are:

• Letter of Engagement (LOE) -- Prepared in collaboration with the client and completed by Week #4.
• Interim Reports -- As specified in the LOE.
• Final Report -- Based on analysis of primary and secondary research, and delivered to the client at the end of the project in the form established in the LOE.
• Final Presentation -- Usually an executive summary of the final report rehearsed before the last week of class, and presented on the last week.

Teams are required to submit weekly activity reports each week.

TEACHING METHOD

The semester is divided into three phases:
1. Definition of the Engagement
2. Research, Analysis, Creation of Deliverables
3. Finalize Analysis, Report and Presentation

Periodic (weekly preferred, 2x/month minimum) conference calls or face to face meetings with the Client are required, plus weekly team meetings to review the project status, make necessary assignments, review & analyze data and draw conclusions.

HONOR PLEDGE

Here at Rutgers Business School, we must ensure that our students have a solid foundation that is
grounded in integrity and respect of basic ethical principles. As a part of this goal, Michael Cooper commissioned a committee comprised of faculty, students and staff to create an Honor Pledge. Rutgers University, in conjunction with the RBS Committee, has established an Honor Code that states:

“I pledge, on my honor, that I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).” (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml)

This Honor Pledge will not displace, modify or amend the standards and procedures set forth in the Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct, http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml#11, but simply suggests a higher set of standards to which RBS students adhere.

ORGANIZATION

Most sessions are organized as team meetings with your team mates, subject matter experts, the client, and/or your advisor. The detailed course plan appears below.

*Phase 1: Definition of the Engagement*

**Week 1: 1/24**
1. **General class session - Course Introduction**
2. Review of projects
3. Team formation and organization – Assignment of a team leader who will be the main contact with the advisor and the client
4. Preparation for client meeting (1)
   a. Brainstorming
   b. Definition of the deliverables - draft

**Week 2: 1/31**
1. **General class session – Overview of Consulting**
2. Preparation for client meeting (2)
3. Outline and draft the LOE
4. Begin secondary research
5. Meeting with client
   a. Discussion of the components of the letter of engagement (LOE)
   b. Exploratory research

**Week 3: 2/7**
1. Revise LOE draft in class
2. Send LOE to client and advisor for review and comment
3. Secondary research on client
4. Meeting with client

**Week 4: 2/14**
1. **General class session – Review Team’s LOE’s with class**
2. Finalize and sign the LOE
3. Assign project tasks to team members
Phase 2: Research, Analysis, Creation of Deliverables

1. General class session: 3/28 – Team’s review of progress, issues, etc.
2. Research and analysis

Phase 3: Finalize Analysis, Report and Presentation

Week 12: 4/11
1. On-going development of deliverables and report

Week 13: 4/18
1. First draft of final report
2. First draft of final presentation

Week 14: 4/25
1. General class session - Dry run final presentation
2. Second draft of final report

Week 15: 5/2
1. Final presentation to client